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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Child Foundation, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is hereby circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[2 February 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Situation of Children in Yemen

As the conflict in Yemen approaches the start of its third year, humanitarian organizations are looking back on the past year or so and examining how better to help those affected by this war. One of the groups most damaged by this violent situation is children because of their vulnerability and a lack of accessibility to resources which are necessary for them to both survive and thrive. Some of these most important areas include access to education, health, food, and basic human rights. Changes in the availability of these resources have been noted by non-profits who are doing their best to improve the lives of Yemeni children and families, and many goals have been set for the coming year. Unfortunately, the aid that is necessary is not always possible to access in these situations for a variety of reasons.

In the past few months, massive issues with accessibility and fuel supplies have created an extremely difficult situation for humanitarian organizations and sponsors to overcome. Blockades of both humanitarian and commercial shipments have limited the ability for aid to reach those in Yemen who need it most. Though many blockades have been lifted, because of the continued inability for aid groups to ship supplies at full capacity, areas that have been heavily effected by conflict have been unable to receive the health support and supplies necessary. Additionally, a serious scarcity of fuel has also harmed this, especially affecting the daily operations at local hospitals. These limited fuel supplies are expected to last through the month, at best, which creates even further concerns for the future.

According to UNICEF, 8.2 million children in Yemen are in need of heath assistance. With recent outbreaks of diphtheria and the continued presence of cholera, the need for vaccines for children, especially those under the age of 5, is becoming increasingly more important. As the most at risk group for these diseases as well as many others, children are the main focus for vaccine and WASH support in order to prevent the spread of these diseases among such a vulnerable population.

Possibly more important than any other issue is the threats to their lives that children in Yemen face on a daily basis. A 2016 report from Human Rights Watch stated that there were 58 airstrikes that killed over 192 children, and among those incidents, multiple had occurred at schools. Not only is educational opportunity an important priority for children at this crucial developmental stage in their lives, but the impact that events like this have on a child's psychological state and can be incredibly destructive. In order to combat the effects of events such as these, many humanitarian organizations have put a lot of effort toward and stressed the importance of providing psychological support for effected children.

A lack of fuel, accessibility, and high prices has continued to create almost constant food insecurity within the country. According to a WHO report, almost 1.8 million children suffer from malnourishment. In an effort to overcome these issues, groups have attempted to send food through southern ports as opposed to the usually more active northern ports. Additionally, food shortages have most widely affected families because more than half of all of these households rely on day-to-day shopping trips. Because of this, when mass food shortages occur, many of these families are unable to put food on their tables.

Lastly, the instability of the education system in Yemen has put children's growth in danger. This past November, millions of children gradually began their school year (at a much later start date than usual) because teacher strikes slowly began to end. Though the transition has begun, schools are still not operating at full capacity, with only a few courses being taught everyday as opposed to the usual 6 or so. Additionally, as mentioned before, the potential for bombings at these locations have continued to pose a serious threat. Goals for the coming year seem to outline improved access for education and improved in-school psychosocial support.

We call on international community, including regional and international organizations,

in particular the United Nations Councils, including the Security Council and Human

Rights Council, to:

- Undertake all peaceful means seeking immediate and peaceful solutions that provide the necessary and sufficient protection for the Yemeni people and respect international human rights and democratic standards and principles.
- Give immediate and adequate attention to the humanitarian situation of Yemeni Children and take immediate measures to enhance the adequacy and availability of needed resources and capacities of humanitarian agencies to intervene.